

“How to Use” section

This section of our website will provide you with helpful directions on “how to” administer various medications that we dispense. We want to help you optimize your care by ensuring the correct use of medications.

How to Use a Topical Medication



Wash your hands and the affected skin area with soap and warm water. Pat the area dry with a clean towel.

Shake lotions and sprays before each use.

Gently apply a small amount of medication to the affected area.

Keep the medication away from the eyes. Try to avoid inhaling sprays and powders.

Do not cover the area with a dressing or bandage unless directed to do so.

Wash your hands after applying the medication.

How to Use a Skin Patch

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to tell you or indicate on the diagram where to apply the patch and what areas to avoid. Choose a skin area that is not hairy, oily, irritated, broken, scarred, or calloused. Also make sure that the area is not located in a place where the patch is likely to be rubbed off by tight clothing (e.g., the waist).

Remove the old skin patch each time you apply a new one. Unless your doctor tells you to reuse the same area, apply each patch to a new area. This will avoid skin irritation.

Wash the area thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry it.

Just before applying the patch, remove the protective backing and throw it away. Try not to touch the exposed surface, because the medication may come off on your fingers.

Press the sticky side of the skin patch firmly against your skin. Make sure that you have good skin contact at the edges of the patch.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water to remove any medication that may have gotten on them. Do not touch your eyes until after you have washed your hands.



How to Use Buccal Tablets

1. Take a sip of water to moisten your mouth if it is dry. Spit out or swallow the water.

2. Place a tablet in the pouch between the inside of your cheek and your upper of lower gum.

3. Close your mouth and do not swallow until the tablet has dissolved completely. Do not chew or swallow the tablet. Do not eat, drink, or smoke while the tablet is dissolving.

4. Do not rinse your mouth for several minutes after the tablet has dissolved.

How to Use Sublingual Tablets

1. Take a sip of water to moisten your mouth if it is dry. Spit out or swallow the water.

2. Place a tablet under your tongue.

3. Close your mouth and do not swallow until the tablet has dissolved completely. Do not chew or swallow the tablet. Do not eat, drink, or smoke while the tablet is dissolving.

4. Do not rinse your mouth for several minutes after the tablet has dissolved.



How to Use Ear Drops

Note: Self-administering ear drops can be difficult. If possible, have someone else administer the drops.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them thoroughly.

Carefully wash and dry the outside of the ear, taking care not to get any water in the ear canal.

Warm the ear drops to body temperature by holding the container in the palms of hands for a few minutes. Do not warm the container in hot water. Hot ear drops can cause pain, nausea, and dizziness.

Shake the container.



Tilt your head (or have the patient tilt his or her head) to the side or lie down with the affected ear up. Use gentle restraint, if necessary, for an infant or a young child.

Open the container carefully. Position the dropper tip near, but not inside, the ear canal opening. Do not allow the dropper to touch the ear, because it could become contaminated or injure the ear. Ear drops must be kept clean.

Pull your ear (or the patient's ear) backward and upward to open the ear canal, as shown in the picture to the right. If the patient is a child younger than three years old, pull the backward and downward, as shown in the picture below.

Place the proper dose of number of drops into the ear canal. Replace the cap on the container.

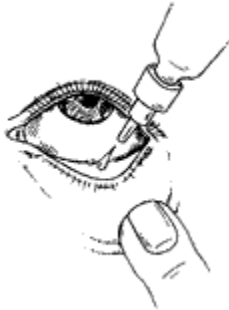
Gently press the small, flat skin flap over the ear canal opening to force out air bubbles and push the drops down the ear canal.



Stay (or keep the patient) in the same position for at least five minutes. If the patient is a child who cannot sit still, the doctor may tell you to place a clean piece of cotton gently into the child's ear, to prevent the medication from draining out.

Repeat the procedure for the other ear, if directed to do so.

Gently wipe any excess medication off the outside of the ear, using caution to avoid getting moisture in the ear canal. Wash your hands.



How to Use Eye Drops

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them.
2. Shake the eye drops container.
3. Remove the cap. Do not touch the dropper tip. Eye drops must be kept clean.
4. Tilt the head back slightly.
5. Pull the lower eyelid down and away from the eyeball to form a pocket, as shown in the picture.
6. Hold the dropper directly over the eye, but do not allow it to touch the eye or eyelid. If self-administering the drops, you may want to brace your hand against your face to keep it steady.
7. Look up, or tell the patient to look up. Place one drop in the pocket and continue to hold the eyelid for a moment while the medication runs in. If you are self-administering the drops, look directly at the dropper tip when positioning it in front of your eye. To keep from blinking, look away from the dropper tip just before you release a drop.
8. Release the eyelid, close the eye for one or two minutes, and, unless you or the patient recently had eye surgery, press a finger against the inner corner of the eye. Do not squeeze the eye shut or rub it. The drops may sting or burn, but this feeling should go away quickly.
9. Wait at least five minutes before applying any more drops or another eye medication.
10. Replace the cap on the container.
11. Wash your hands.



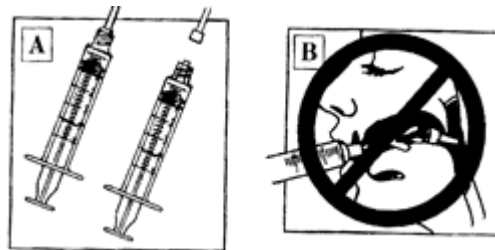
How to Use Eye Ointments and Gels

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them.
2. Remove the cap from the medication tube. Do not touch the tip of the tube. Eye ointments and gels must be kept clean.

3. Tilt the head back slightly.
4. Pull the lower eyelid down and away from the eyeball to form a pocket, as shown in the picture. If self-administering eye ointment, you may wish to sit or stand in front of a mirror and brace your hand against your face to keep it steady.
5. Squeeze the tube and apply the prescribed amount of ointment or gel (usually a 1/4 to 1/2-inch ribbon) to the inner surface of the lower eyelid. Do not touch the tip of the medication tube to the eye or eyelid. When self-administering eye ointment, look directly at the tip of the tube when positioning it in front of your eye. To keep from blinking, look up (away from the tube) just before you apply the ointment.
6. Release the eyelid, gently close the eye, and keep it closed for one or two minutes. While the eyelid is closed, rotate the eye to distribute the medication. Do not rub the eye.
7. Replace the cap on the medication tube.
8. Wipe off any excess ointment or gel with a clean tissue.
9. Wash your hands.
10. Eye ointments and gels can temporarily blur the vision. Avoid activities requiring good vision until your vision clears.

How to Use an Oral Liquid Syringe

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Dry them.
2. Work near or over a sink. Pour a small amount of liquid into a small, clean cup or glass OR insert an adapter into the opening of the medicine container.
3. If there is a small plastic cap on the tip of the syringe, remove it and throw it away, as shown in A. Young children can choke on these caps if they get into the throat, as shown in B.



4. Push the syringe plunger in as far as it will go.
5. Turn the syringe so that the markings face you and find the marking corresponding to the desired dose.

6. Place the syringe tip below the surface of the liquid OR (if you have an adapter) dampen the syringe tip with tap water, insert it into the adapter, and turn the container upside down.
7. With the syringe at eye level, pull back on the plunger until fluid fills the syringe to a point just beyond the appropriate marking.
8. With the syringe pointed up, tap it lightly to dislodge any air bubbles. Then push the plunger until it lines up with the appropriate marking.
9. Children or adult patients should sit upright while the medication is administered. Cradle an infant in your arms with the head and shoulders elevated and press gently on the chin to open the mouth.
10. Direct the syringe toward the inside of the cheek and gums near the back of the mouth. To prevent choking and drooling, press the syringe plunger slowly and administer the dose in several small portions, allowing the patient to swallow each portion. Gently stroke the outside of an infant's throat to promote swallowing. Do not lay an infant down until the entire dose has been swallowed.
11. Pour any remaining medicine from the cup or glass into the container and replace the cap OR close the cover of the adapter. Store the container as directed. Wipe up any spills.
12. Pull the plunger out of the syringe, rinse the syringe and plunger thoroughly with warm tap water, allow them to dry, and reassemble the syringe.

How to Use Nasal Sprays, Pumps, or Inhalers

1. Blow your nose gently to clear your nostrils.
2. Clean the outer portion of your nose with a damp tissue.
3. Wash your hand with soap and warm water and dry them.
4. Shake the medication container. If you think a nasal inhaler might be empty, test it by removing the metal canister and placing it in a container of water. If the canister floats, it is empty. Reassemble the inhaler if the canister sinks; it is not empty.



Nasal Spray

5. Keep your head upright. Press a finger against the side of your nose to close one nostril. With your mouth closed, insert the tip of the pump, spray, or inhaler into the open nostril. Sniff in through the nostril while quickly and firmly squeezing the spray container or activating the pump or inhaler.



Nasal Pump

6. Hold your breath for a few seconds and then breathe out through your mouth.



Nasal Inhaler

7. Repeat this procedure for the other nostril only if directed to do so.
8. Rinse the spray, pump, or inhaler tip with hot water and replace the cap on the container.

9. Wash your hands.

How to Use Nose Drops

Note: Giving nose drops to yourself can be difficult. If possible, have someone else administer the drops.

1. Have the patient blow his or her nose gently to clear the nostrils. Use a bulb syringe to gently clear the nostrils of an infant.
2. Clean the outer portion of the nose with a damp tissue.
3. Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them.
4. Lie down (or have the patient lie on his or her back) on a bed with the head tilted back and the neck supported (allow the head to hang over the edge of the bed or place a small pillow under the neck and shoulders). Cradle an infant in your arms with the head tilted back.



5. Shake the nose drops container.

6. Insert the dropper tip into the nostril about 1/3 inch, and place the prescribed dose or number of drops in the nostril. Try not to touch the nose with the dropper tip.

7. Stay (or have the patient stay) in the same position for at least five minutes.

8. Unless otherwise directed, repeat these steps for the other nostril.

9. Rinse the dropper tip with hot water and replace the cap on the container.

10. Wash your hands.